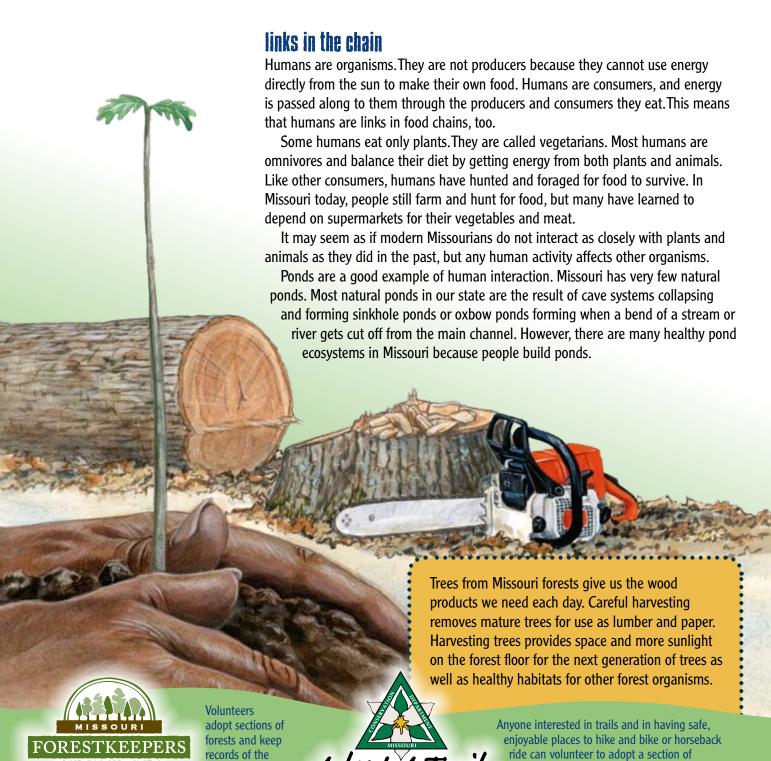


humans are organisms, too

Organisms, populations of organisms and communities of populations all interact with each other and with the non-living elements in their environment. In this chapter, you will learn how humans fit into this picture and how they impact organisms and ecosystems in both beneficial and harmful ways.



conservation area trails to monitor.

forest's health.



People work together to bring parks and hiking trails back into their cities. These green spaces provide habitat for native trees and other plants and attract birds, butterflies, rabbits, foxes and many other organisms necessary for a healthy ecosystem.

Hunting and fishing are ways for humans to interact with their environment just as other predators do. The Missouri Department of Conservation studies animal populations and then sets rules and regulations for people to follow when they hunt, trap or fish. Harvesting animals, such as deer, turkey, raccoons and fish, according to these rules and regulations has a **beneficial effect** on the ecosystem. Careful hunting, trapping and fishing helps to manage and balance wildlife populations.

Hiking, bird watching, butterfly watching, mushroom hunting and outdoor photography are other ways humans enjoy and interact with other organisms in different ecosystems.

Unfortunately there are human activities that have **harmful effects** on other organisms. When people carve their initials on the bark of a tree, the carving leaves the tree's trunk open to disease and insects. People who hike or ride ATVs, bicycles or horses off marked trails through streams, forests and prairies can damage these ecosystems. Some people litter, and litter is not only harmful to organisms and their environment, it is also ugly.

Humans have opportunities to keep ecosystems healthy and balanced. Humans also have the power to make choices that could unbalance them forever.



OPERATION GAMETHIEF

Wildlife in Missouri belong to the people of Missouri. One way people can protect wildlife is to report **poachers**. Call 1-800-392-1111.



Native plants are plants that grow naturally and have the special structures needed to survive in an area. Gardening with native plants benefits many other organisms, including the gardener!

